



Meeting note

File reference	TR030004
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	14 April 2021
Meeting with	Oikos Marine and South Side Development (OMSSD)
Venue	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Meeting objectives	Project Update
Circulation	All Attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

Introduction

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely. The Inspectorate introduced changes to the case team.

Update on Application submission date

The Applicant advised that consultation was due to complete on 18 May 2021. The target submission date of Quarter 3, Autumn 2021 was still planned, but this would be dependent on the consultation outcomes. The Inspectorate requested to be kept up to date regarding any changes. It advised that if the Applicant planned to request draft document reviews, to consider this as well as consultation responses in its schedule.

Statutory Consultation

Statutory consultation launched on 6 April 2021 and responses had started to be received via telephone surgeries requests, questionnaire responses and queries via the project mailbox. In its responses, the Applicant was signposting people to where relevant information could be found in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), which formed part of the consultation documentation. Planned webinars would not be topic specific and additional material could be added as appropriate to respond to any themes arising from consultation responses. The sessions would include informative presentations and question/answer sessions. In planning the sessions, the Applicant was looking to clarify and address some commonly misunderstood topics, and misinformation in the public domain.

From responses to date, the Applicant has identified themes of concerns relating to general safety matters and transport. In relation to safety, the Applicant had sought to explain control measures in the Safety chapter of the PEIR, including an overview of the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations, further explaining these matters in non-technical terms in the Consultation Booklet.

Discussions were ongoing with statutory consultees. The Applicant was engaging with the Environment Agency (EA) regarding flood risk. It was keen to progress mitigation proposals and its overall ecological package with Natural England (NE). The Applicant had discussed its principle approach with Essex County Council's ecology group, with further discussion to follow surrounding detail on the approach to onshore ecology matters. The Applicant described positive engagement with local authorities, the principal parties being Essex County Council and Castle Point Borough Council. The Applicant noted that the local election would take place during the statutory consultation and Castle Point's local plan examination was scheduled to commence towards the end of the statutory consultation period.

Virtual Exhibition

The Applicant provided a demonstration of its virtual exhibition room on the project website. This provided a virtual 360% exhibition space, with links to electronic versions of the information that would have been available at a physical venue (including information boards, banners and consultation documentation). The Applicant was initially concerned about Wi-Fi signal strength being a barrier to accessing this but advised this was not an issue for Canvey Island. The Applicant had spoken with the local authorities about hard to reach groups and had made initial contact with these. USB sticks with consultation information were available, as well as hard copies of documents upon request.

Notices, Notifications and Category 3 Persons

The Applicant advised it had identified and served notice on potential category three persons in relation to potential increased noise levels on an access road. The Inspectorate advised there is no legal requirement for them to submit a Book of Reference, but this could prove useful for any potential Examination process depending on the volume of Category 3 persons identified. The Applicant was referred to the National Infrastructure Website to look at where this has been done on others projects, one example is the Little Crow Solar Park NSIP, where a book of reference was submitted even though the Applicant has not identified any land interest.

Statutory Undertakers

The Applicant advised there would be a number of protective provisions. A gas pipe passing through the site would need to be moved, and it was in correspondence with all relevant statutory undertakers, with no objections identified to date.

Mitigation

The Applicant advised mitigation (mainly ecological) would be provided. Two mitigation areas from previous development on site were expected to be affected. It was aiming to separate inherent and additional mitigation. It was using the relevant chapters in the PEIR to set out mitigation for specific issues, such as ecology and noise. The Applicant is looking into providing a level of net gain. This was in line with general policy but also

in respect of the wider debate surrounding the Environment Bill. It aims to develop a suitable package to mitigate the ecological impact and also provide for some enhancement. The ecological mitigation package is still being developed in consultation with Natural England. Discussions were ongoing with a range of landowners and organisations about the potential delivery of mitigation options. The Applicant had served notice on persons with interest in the land being considered, to allow for appropriate consultation and advised at the point of application the preferred option would be chosen.

A range of options on certain matters had been identified in the PEIR, including options for disposal of dredge materials. For dredge materials, notice had been served on the Crown Estate in case option selection included offshore disposal.

Notification and publication

The Applicant advised that in terms of notification, it had deliberately adopted a precautionary approach, for example placing notice in Lloyds List for the offshore element of the project even though it was not clear that this was required. In its consultation information it sought to explain how the project had developed since the informal consultation in 2019. Chapter 4 of the PEIR sought to explain how the project had regards to the 2019 consultation as well as the wider design and engineering work that had been undertaken. It referred to its consideration of HSE standards for the type of facility in its front-end engineering design process.

AOB

- The Inspectorate reiterated the offer to review draft documents and advised notice would be required if the Applicant wishes to utilise this.
- The Applicant queried if there was any link between the NSIP team and local plans team as the Castle Point local plan examination was about to commence. The Inspectorate advised that the two teams do not share information in terms of case specifics as the processes are separate although it will be for the Inspector to examine any relevant and important information. The Applicant said they have alerted the local plan Inspector – through their local plan statement - to the fact they are out for consultation on the proposed Oikos NSIP.

Summary of actions/follow-up

The following actions were agreed:

- The next meeting would be arranged for the end of May 2021.